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ABSTRACT

Research on sex differences in communication has produced mixed and contradictory results. An erroneous overlap exists between self reports of male-female behaviors, others' reports of perceived behaviors, and stereotyped projections based on social conditioning. The solution to this confusion in gender communication research may be triangulation, or the use of multiple and diverse data sources and collection techniques. Triangulation as a methodology for understanding the female experience holds promise because it encourages the convergence of traditional and non-traditional data by admitting multiple perspectives. The use of triangulation to compare males and females in organizations could help explain why male and female professionals who have similar backgrounds and exhibit similar preferences for leadership and leadership communication styles experience different rates of promotion within organizations. One example of a research design using triangulation compared male and female communication behaviors during decision making and determined how behaviors were evaluated in terms of effectiveness. Research instruments included self reports, collection of demographic and career data, personal interviews, videotaped decision making interactions, content analysis of the tapes, and evaluations by business professionals. Triangulation allowed for a more holistic evaluation of sex differences in communication. (An eight-page list of references is provided.) (SRT)

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TRIANGULATION IN GENDER RESEARCH: THE NEED FOR CONVERGING METHODOLOGIES

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TRIANGULATION IN GENDER RESEARCH:
THE NEED FOR CONVERGING METHODOLOGIES

Introduction

Over the last twenty years, researchers have become increasingly interested in the communication of males and females. Numerous studies detail sex differences although many findings have been buried in research examining major variables such as self-disclosure, interpersonal interaction, and nonverbal behavior (Montgomery & Norton, 1981).

Within the last ten years, the study of gender and communication has evolved as a specific research specialization among communication scholars. Now that researchers have compiled a sizeable body of literature on sex differences, they have begun the process of recursive examination (Bates, 1984; Putman, 1982; Solomon, 1984; Staley, in press) and report that research results are fragmented, mixed, and controversial. Rarely has a unifying framework been used to examine male-female differences (Montgomery & Norton, 1981).

The gender and communication research picture is further confounded by two additional factors: Researchers often operationalize variables differently from one study to the next; and second, contextual factors

within research studies obviously influence outcomes. The research on communicative dominance, for example, investigates such variables as length of utterance (Swacker, 1975), number of topics generated by each speaker (Fishman, 1980), or number of interruptions made by each person (Zimmerman & West, 1975). While all these operational definitions of conversational dominance may overlap conceptually, it is possible for males (or females) to be conversationally dominant in one study but not in another. While this problem is not unique to gender research, it nevertheless contributes to the perception among scholars that "gender role research is in a state of confusion" (Solomon, 1984, p. 98).

Findings may also conflict based on a variety of contextual variables, such as the size, makeup, and characteristics of the communicative group under observation, or the research context itself--laboratory versus organizational setting, for example. Researchers such as Zimmerman and West (1975), Eakins and Eakins (1976) and Baird (1976) found that men interrupt others more frequently than do women. Camden and Kennedy (1982), however, found that graduate student women were more likely to interrupt in group settings than were graduate men, concluding that interruptions in their study were an attempt to gain dominance, rather than a display of dominance. Likewise, many studies document perceived differences in male-female leadership style; however, researchers such as Osborn and Vicars (1976) and Brown (1979) conclude that differences may vary depending on the research context: "The widely held belief that women make inferior leaders seems to give way in actual work situations. . . . Practicing managers overwhelmingly feel that there is no difference

between male and female leadership styles; whereas students generally hold the opposite to be true" (Brown, 1979, pp. 607-608).

A further point to emerge from recent critiques of the literature on sex differences is the erroneous overlap between self-reports of male-female behaviors, others' reports of perceived behaviors, and stereotyped projections based on social conditioning (Staley, in press). Often distinctions between these three distinct research categories become fuzzy, resulting in a single informal generalization which is then referred to as sex differences (Staley & Cohen, 1986).

In truth, investigating all three perspectives, within their appropriate parameters, contributes to our understanding of male and female communicative behavior. Many studies identify expected differences based on stereotypes of socially approved male and female roles. Kramer (1974), for example, found distinct differences between the stereotypes of male versus female speech. Relatively few studies, on the other hand, document actual differences between the speech of men and women. Self-perceptions of male-female communication find more similarities than differences (McDaris & Javidi, 1985; Montgomery & Norton, 1981; Staley & Cohen, 1986). To date, no single study we know of has investigated all three perspectives concurrently.

The Need for Converging Methodologies

The purpose of this essay is twofold. First, we will provide a detailed example of the confusion in gender-communication research by surveying the mixed literature on evaluating male versus female

organizational performance. We see this as a critical research area to investigate because of its relevance to the divergent career outcomes experienced by men and women.

Perhaps the single most important finding to emerge from the plethora of research comparing professional males and females is the number of studies which note a lack of significant differences in both attitudes toward work and actual behaviors on the job (e.g., Bartol, 1977; Birdsall, 1980; Day & Stogdill, 1972; Donnell & Hall, 1980). On the other hand, the most important factor in determining the selection of potential managers and leaders may not be actual or even perceived behavior, but rather, how behavior is evaluated (Hollander & Julian, 1979). Nieva and Gutek (1980) suggest that a significant barrier for professional women is prejudicial evaluation of their qualifications and performance. Therefore, we have decided to review the conflicting research in this area by focusing on levels of evaluation--self, peer, subordinate, and supervisor.

Second, we will propose an innovative research methodology which provides a holistic, integrated perspective critical to the study of women's communication--multi-level triangulation. Multiple methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, and multi-level perspectives--self, peer, subordinate and superior--have produced a collection of mixed results. And while mixed findings alone do not justify the call for methodological "revolution," we assert with Sypher and Sypher (1984) that "communication researchers ought to be generally concerned that the phenomena they study converge, at least to some extent, with independent indicators of the same phenomena" (p. 98). Triangulation, or the use of

more than one method in the study of a single phenomenon (Denzin, 1970), can serve to enhance the confidence of gender researchers by capturing a "more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study" (Jick, 1979, in Tompkins & Cheney, 1983).

We believe that the study of women's communication is a viable research area, an area which has been overlooked until recently. For generations, research was conducted by male researchers using male subjects and then generalized to all human beings. With the women's movement came the realization that women's experience is diverse, complex, and divergent from the experience of men, and thus was born a new research specialization. However, because the study of women has evolved as a "female" research area with a concentration of female researchers "impelled by the researcher's passion for the subject" (Foss & Foss, 1986, p. 4), the opportunity exists for bias in the opposite direction. Researchers must continue to search for innovative methodologies to best describe the experience of women, not only through the use of innovative qualitative methodologies such as oral history, but through innovative methodologies which are objective and holistic.

Evaluation: Self, Peers, Subordinates, Supervisors

A detailed example of the confusion in gender-communication research may be seen in the mixed literature on evaluating male versus female performance in organizational settings. Some studies show no differences (i.e., Dipboye & Wiley, 1977; Frank & Drucker, 1977; Hall & Hall, 1976;

Moses & Boehm, 1975; some studies show that males are evaluated more favorably than females (i.e., Dipboye, Arvey, & Tepstra, 1977; Dipboye, Fromkin, & Wiback, 1975; Goldberg, 1968; Rosen & Jerdee, 1973; Schein, 1973); and some studies show that females are evaluated more favorably than males (i.e., Abramson, Goldberg, Greenberg, & Abramson, 1977; Hamner, Kim, Baird, Bigoness, 1974; Jacobson & Effertz, 1974; Peters, O'Conner, Weekley, Pooyan, Frank & Erenkrantz, 1983). Inconsistencies may be seen in the research on female professionals' self, peer, subordinate, and supervisor evaluation.

Nieva and Gutek (1980) suggest that a potential barrier to professional women is prejudicial evaluation of females' qualifications and performance. They note that while employee evaluation should be objectively based on merit, extensive documentation exists of deviation from these ideals. Glucklich and Povall (1979) studied 26 organizations and found that in 22 of the 26, one or more managers concerned with hiring, training, and promotions said they "were discriminating or intending to discriminate against men or women in the future" (p. 28). Women are more likely to be subjected to negative bias in evaluation when the required level of inference is high, when sex-role incongruence occurs, or when women are highly competent (Nieva & Gutek, 1980).

Inconsistencies in Self Evaluation

When female professionals evaluate their own performance in organizations, results are mixed. Snyder and Bruning (1979), for example, surveyed both supervisors and nonsupervisors and found that women

reported themselves to be as competent as their male counterparts. These results stand in contrast to a study by Deaux (1979) in which women managers' self-ratings were lower than those of their male colleagues. Ezell, Odewahn, and Sherman (1980), asked 304 male managers and 271 female managers to complete questionnaires with scales measuring self-perceptions of ability, motivation, and environment, or the extent to which the individual receives feedback from and copes effectively with the work environment. In terms of overall results, female managers reported greater competence-motivation and competence-environment, but less competence-ability than male managers.

Inconsistencies in Peer Evaluation

When the performance of female professionals is evaluated by their peers, both male and female, the existence of sex-role conditioning in the work place becomes evident. Wood (1976) found that males reported anxiety about restructuring relationships with females who were once subordinates but have become peers. Haefnert (1977), in surveying workers in two Illinois towns, found a clear preference for working with highly competent men over highly competent women. Donnell and Hall (1980) found that female managers are not as willing as male managers to share information with their colleagues--"confirming evidence of interpersonal noise at the peer level" (p. 7). In a more recent study, however, Tsui and Gutek (1984) found that female managers were given higher performance evaluations by peers than were their male counterparts.

When research on women professionals examines peer evaluations in terms of the sex-composition of the peer groups--female-female or female-male--findings are often negative. Matteson (1976), for example, found fewer positive attitudes toward women managers among male managers. Furthermore, attitudes toward women managers became less favorable for both males and females with increased work experience. Albrecht (1976) reported that female scientists are usually not sought out by their male colleagues, nor do these women seek out their male colleagues. Wood (1976) surveyed 100 male managers who identified two critical faults of female managers: Females tend to be overdemanding, particularly of other females, and they are unwilling to provide help to other females. While some research reports findings to the contrary (i.e., Jabes, 1980), Ezell, Odewahn, and Sherman (1980), in a survey of 575 male and female managers, found that females believed other female managers were less competent than males in similar positions.

Inconsistencies in Subordinate Evaluation

Despite difficulties such as these in negotiating new roles for professional women in organizations, some researchers identify a growing body of empirical literature providing evidence that women are experiencing managerial success (White, Crino, & DeSanctis, 1981). Indeed, although management has traditionally been a male dominated occupation, increasing evidence indicates that females can be as successful as males (Hennig & Jardim, 1977). On the other hand, research which is now several decades old indicated definite bias against female

supervisors. Ellman (1963), for example, found that 81% of queried personnel executives agreed that men generally object to female supervisors; 51% of the sample believed that females object to female supervisors as well. More recently, however, Ezell, Odewahn, and Sherman, (1981) found that subordinates who have experienced working under female managers have more positive perceptions of female managers' motivation to perform effectively. Petty, Odewahn, Bruning, and Thomason (1977), found no differences among subordinates' job satisfaction levels due to supervisor sex.

The job satisfaction of subordinates has been investigated frequently as an evaluation measure for male and female superiors (Ezell, Odewahn, & Sherman, 1981; Petty, et al., 1977); however, researchers have investigated other issues as well. Donnell and Hall (1980), for example, administered the Management Relations Survey (MRS) to 428 subordinates of 185 female managers and 504 subordinates of 185 male managers. In the first section of the MRS, subordinates assess the communication practices of their managers. Subordinates reported no differences between the communication behaviors of male and female managers; however, subordinates of female managers reported that they generally solicited less feedback from their managers than did subordinates of male managers. Wexley and Pulakos (1983), in a sample of 286 manager-subordinate dyads, found that the more cognizant a subordinate is of his or her manager's work-related attitudes, the more favorably the subordinate appraises the manager's leadership performance. These results, however, occurred more reliably in same-sex, as opposed to mixed-sex, dyads.

Other researchers have investigated basic dimensions of leadership behavior: "consideration", or warm, trusting, friendly behaviors, and "initiating structure", or behaviors which include overt attempts to organize group activities and achieve organizational goals (see, for example, Stogdill, 1974). Research generally shows that superiors are rated more highly when they score highly in both dimensions (Stogdill, 1974); however, some studies suggest that both males and females prefer male superiors who exhibit more "initiating structure" behaviors and female superiors who exhibit more "consideration" behaviors (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Petty & Lee, 1975; Petty & Miles, 1976).

Results have sometimes indicated that successful female leadership performance is evaluated more highly than similar performance by males. Jacobson and Effertz (1974) found that group members rated female leadership more highly than they rated male leadership. They explain their findings by citing Samuel Johnson's remark on women preachers in the eighteenth century: "Sir, a woman preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well: but you are very surprised to find it done at all." Abramson, Goldberg, Greenberg and Abramson (1977) have referred to similar findings as the "talking platypus phenomenon". It should be pointed out, however, that these two studies were not carried out in organizational settings.

Inconsistencies in Supervisor Evaluations

Research has also asked the question: How are female professionals evaluated as subordinates? Again, results are mixed. Evaluators are

constrained by their judgments, values, and perceptions of role behaviors. If evaluators' perceptions of the female role are not compatible with their perceptions of the managerial role, these conflicting sets of role expectations may affect evaluations of performance (White, et al., 1981). Schein (1978) cautions that stereotyped thinking by superiors about a woman's capability to function effectively as a manager may limit her ability to perform well and to be promoted. If a superior perceives that a woman is less aggressive, competitive, or forceful than her male counterpart, her superior may not require of the woman tasks which utilize such skills. This, in turn, may limit the female professional, keep her from developing these abilities, promote within the organization an image that she cannot perform these tasks, and thereby restrict her promotional progress.

Along these lines, Kiesler (1975) identified a cognitive bias which occurs during the evaluation process: "actuarial prejudice," an expectation of inferior performance from subgroup members based on available information about the group. It may be the case that since there are fewer successful women than men in organizations, evaluators will expect all females to be less successful; therefore, these expectations will surface in performance evaluations. Patterson (1975), in a study of 192 male and female managers, found that females were consistently rated lower than males on evaluations of promotability and performance. Moses and Boehm (1975), on the other hand, found no sex differences in the potential ratings of 4,846 female managers and 8,885 male managers. Hall and Hall (1976) found no sex differences in ratings

of job incumbents' ability, motivation, or overall task performance. Likewise, Deaux (1979) found no differences in the performance ratings given to female and male managers by superiors and Mobley (1982) found similar results. Furthermore, Schwartz (1971, cited in White, et al., 1981) found that 95% of employers of women managers rated their performance on the job as excellent, very good, or good. Wood (1976), in polling nearly 100 male and female managers, discovered that most managers believe women are proving their competence and winning increased acceptance in organizations.

Of particular interest regarding evaluation of subordinates by superiors is the amount of mutual agreement between the two. Research demonstrates that the perceptions of subordinates and superiors can differ significantly (i.e., Baird, 1977; Henemann, 1974; Thornton, 1968). Staley and Shockley-Zalabak (1986), for example, reported little agreement between female professionals and their superiors on their assessed communication competencies. In assessments of 15 areas of communication proficiency, a woman and her supervisor agreed only on the woman's proficiency in the areas of business writing, oral presentations, and communications technology--visible, overt skill sets. The authors suggest that the significance of their findings does not lie in the areas of agreement between female professionals and their supervisors. Rather, the lack of agreement in areas of critically complex competencies such as group, interpersonal relationships, motivating people, and delegating authority may be key to understanding the managerial development of female professionals and their subsequent promotional progress.

Triangulation and Gender Research

The preceding overview of research on evaluation of male and female performance exemplifies the general perception among scholars that gender role research is important yet lacking in comprehensively explaining the gender experience. Multiple methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, and multi-level perspectives--self, peer, subordinate and superior--have produced a collection of mixed results. In the remainder of this essay, we wish to propose an innovative approach to the study of women's communication through the use of triangulated research design. Although the examples of our triangulation approach are applied to professional women, the application of the methodology to the diverse contexts of the female experience holds promise. Our proposal is based on an assumption fundamental to the feminist perspective, namely, that, ". . . the study of gender and women, in particular, is a valuable endeavor" (Foss & Foss, 1986, p. 3).

Triangulation can be described as the use of multiple and diverse data sources and collection techniques to study a single research question or understand complex phenomena. The underlying assumption for using triangulation is that multiple sources and diverse data contribute better than single sources and methods to our understanding of research questions and their contexts.

Triangulated designs permit both description and interpretation (Albrecht & Ropp, 1982) and can encompass assumptions from divergent paradigms (Faules, 1982). A research design is triangulated when researchers determine that data to better understand the phenomenon under

study are located in a variety of similar and dissimilar sources, forms, and locations. Multi-level triangulation refers to a particular application of triangulation methodology when the researcher seeks data from multiple sources with whom the subject or subjects under study communicate. The methodology of triangulation (whether multi-level or not) brings a pluralism of approaches to bear on understanding experiences. As such, triangulation encourages a more comprehensive examination of complex phenomena than the best of single method designs. Triangulated designs encourage the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods thereby maximizing single method benefits while neutralizing single method drawbacks. Table 1 is a partial list of data sources and collection methods which are used in a variety of combinations for triangulated designs.

Insert Table 1 about here

Single method designs are appropriate when the experiences in question can be understood through examination of data collected from a single source or with a single method. Triangulation is appropriate when single data sources cannot be expected to either comprehensively explain the phenomena under study or when inconsistencies in single method designs cannot be explained. Triangulated designs are used to collect data from multiple sources identified as relevant to the research question. Single method designs are used to collect data from the single source identified as being the most relevant to the research question. For complex questions, multiple sources and forms enhance the possibility that researchers will discover important and often subtle interrelationships.

Furthermore triangulated designs do not require researchers to make often impossible judgments about what is the single "best" source or form of data for difficult and marginally understood problems.

Multiple methods of data collection guard against biases frequently introduced by single method designs. Since both advantages and disadvantages are inherent in each research methodology, we advocate an approach which combines methodologies, and, in multi-level triangulation, perspectives on the same communication phenomenon. (See Table 2 for a list of the advantages and disadvantages of commonly used methodologies for studying women's communication.) Limitations in experimentation, for example, can be identified and better understood when experimentation is combined with observation and interviews. Limitations in observation and interviewing can be counterbalanced by broadening the scope for data collection through written surveys. Even when data are collected from single sources, multiple methods of collection permit examination of whether there is convergence of findings across methods. Convergence, similarity of results across diverse methods, enhances confidence in problem identification and explanation. Divergent results also contribute to understanding and can raise important questions, define future research directions, and identify diversity and deviance. As such multiple collection methods are a strength of triangulation and a limitation in single method approaches.

Insert Table 2 about here

Triangulation as a methodology has been applied to the study of numerous groups. Triangulation has not, however, been extensively applied

to gender research. As such, the traditional methodology of triangulation is non-traditional for understanding women's communication within varying contexts. Furthermore, triangulation in general and multi-level triangulation in particular are suited to support a primary characteristic of the feminist perspective which suggests that feminist scholarship, ". . . utilizes women's experiences, which are manifest in their symbols, rituals, and regular practices, as a starting point through which to approach events or phenomena under investigation" (Foss & Foss, 1986, p. 3). We, therefore, propose triangulation as an alternative and important methodology for the study of women's communication.

Triangulation as a methodology for understanding the female experience holds promise because it encourages the convergence of traditional and non-traditional data by admitting of multiple perspectives for the understanding of experience. Triangulation can encourage the use of subjects as active participants helping to define research agendas, provide data, and verify data interpretation. As such, subjects are actively engaged in helping the researcher reflect their experience rather than fit experiences into overly rigid research designs.

Active subject involvement can go hand in hand in a triangulated design with more traditional quantitative measures. Qualitative measures such as open-ended questionnaires, interviews, participant observation, content analysis, letters, diaries, and other written records can converge with demographic data, socio-economic status measures, test results, and laboratory experiments to generate a more holistic picture of the female experience. Indeed, one has but to look at what critics consider lacking

in the explanatory power of much current research to envision how triangulation might improve our understanding.

Few areas in communication research produce more confusing and seemingly contradictory findings than those attempting to describe similarities and differences in the communication behaviors of males and females. We have not been able to thoughtfully distinguish between male and female communicative experiences in similar contexts. For example, as we previously discussed, gender and communication research results are often mixed and controversial. It is also true that males and females exhibit similar behaviors, particularly in organizational contexts, yet do not experience similar career outcomes (Day & Stogdill, 1972; National Science Foundation, 1984; Devanna, in Fraker, 1984; U.S. Labor Department, 1985).

Research efforts comparing males and females in organizations have generally describe an "event," i.e., leadership behaviors, without being able to contextualize the event into the broader experience. That is to say, an understanding of the event does not provide an understanding of the experience. Triangulation offers an alternative methodology to encompass the event as part of the process which we call the experience. In other words, a triangulated design would not only study actual behaviors but self and others' perceptions of behaviors as they contribute to outcomes. We would hope to better understand, for example, why male and female professionals who have similar backgrounds, exhibit similar preferences for leadership, and leadership communication styles, experience differing vertical mobility rates in organizations.

Specifically, we are proposing that a multi-level triangulation design could help us determine how preferences and behaviors converge with evaluation of behaviors to explain promotability and therefore the male and female organizational experience. Furthermore, multi-level (self, supervisor, subordinate, peer) evaluation in a single design holds promise for better understanding many of the other seeming inconsistencies we have previously identified.

Earlier we described diversity in findings among several self, peer, and subordinate evaluation studies. Irrespective of the specific findings in the evaluation studies, their single method designs did not permit comprehensive examination of the underlying attitudes and experiences which contributed to evaluation. From these studies we come to understand the complexity and apparent inconsistencies of evaluation but are unable to contextualize evaluation into the broader female/male experience. Triangulated designs could attempt to better reflect the complexity of the experience by relating, for example, evaluations to past experiences, attitudes, and expectations. The density of information obtained from qualitative data (interviews, records, stories, etc.) might be combined with the breadth of data from quantitative approaches (surveys, demographic data, mobility rates, etc.) to better understand the evaluation experience.

Multi-Level Triangulation--A Case Study for Gender Research

To this point we have discussed recommended applications of triangulation methodology as a possibility for solving existing research

problems, better understanding of the female experience, and contributing to a holistic understanding of male/female similarities and differences. We will now provide an example of a research design using triangulation to study male/female communication behavior during decision making. The purpose of the research was to compare male and female communication behaviors during decision-making and to determine how behaviors were evaluated in terms of effectiveness.

Two hundred male and female subjects participated in the research project which included a battery of self-report instruments, collection of demographic and career data, personal interviews about decision-making and career progress, video-taped decision-making interactions with same sex and opposite sex others, content analysis by trained judges of interviews and video tapes, and evaluations of decision-making effectiveness from video-taped interactions by business professionals.

This multi-level triangulated design permits using both qualitative and quantitative data to better understand communication behaviors and the evaluations of those behaviors. We were able to match subjects for video-taping on similarities in professional backgrounds and on similarities and differences of preference for dominance, leadership, communication apprehension, and conflict style preferences, thereby, controlling for variables other than gender known to be influential in the decision-making process. Interview data were used to examine decision-making premises for participants. Content analysis of the tapes permitted examination of factors such as initiation of interaction, interruptions, control of time behaviors, and participation levels. Additionally, we

were able to examine verbal factors such as social facilitative behaviors which showed agreement, released tension, or showed solidarity. Task facilitative behaviors were coded in information seeking and giving categories. Finally, a range of nonverbal behaviors was coded.

A scale representing a set of criteria for decision/making was developed and used by business professionals to evaluate the effectiveness of taped interactions. Comparisons were possible between content analysis of behaviors and evaluations of effectiveness. Additionally, self-report instruments and demographic data were compared for males and females and with evaluations of effectiveness.

While this research design is not flawless, we do suggest, however, that data from the multi-level triangulated design gives us a more complete picture with which to approach our questions than any of the data taken in isolation. Additionally, the informal input from our participants facilitated the development of new questions and other ways of understanding and studying male and female communication. As such, triangulation methodology both seeks answers and raises questions, a valuable asset of any design.

Summary

Triangulation methodology provides an alternative perspective for doing research on women's communication. Multi-level triangulation can encourage the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches with particular emphasis on the active participation of women and those with whom they most frequently interact (peers, supervisors, and subordinates

for professional women). Triangulated designs are complicated and yield extensive amounts of data for analysis. However, the richness of the data potentially provides better pictures for understanding the experiences we need to study. Triangulation as a methodology is appropriate for understanding the styles, forms and strategies of/for communication exhibited by women.

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Table 1

DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION METHODS USED IN TRIANGULATED DESIGNS

Data Sources	Collection methods
The research subject	Interviews
Those with whom the subject interacts	Questionnaires
The researcher	Laboratory experiments
Demographic data	Observation
Socio-economic data	Participant observation
Historical records	Content analysis
Personal records (diaries, letters, etc.)	Videotape, recordings

Table 2

Research Methodology	Advantages in the Study of Women's Communication	Disadvantages in the Study of Women's Communication
Self-Reflection	Females know best the female experience	Responses may be projections of cultural stereotypes rather than "real" responses
Survey	Females know best the female experience	Researchers may inject bias and/or stereotyped projections into phrased questions
Naturalistic Observatiion	"Actual" female behavior is observed	Cultural stereotypes or feminist bias may color interpretation of the data
Participant-Observation	Females subjects are also female researchers--subjective "accuracy"	Female researchers may inject their own biases and expectations into generation and interpretation of the data
(Quasi) Experimentation	Control of data generation may reduce researcher bias and, to some degree, cultural bias	Laboratory settings may preclude researchers from ascertaining the richness of women's experience Preconceived categories may be erroneously applied to the study of women's communication